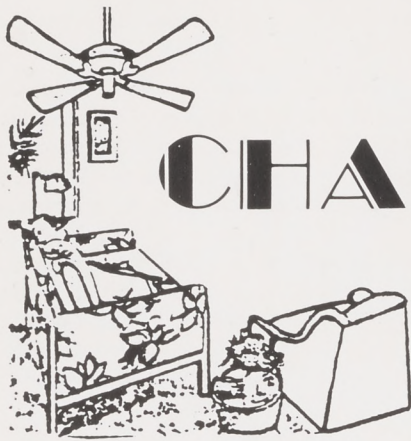


Journey

NOVEMBER 1983





CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

by Nancy Radclyffe

Collective Writer and Senior Chaplain

The Growth and Needs of SLACC

Many of you have now read the proposal written as the initial guidelines for Spiritual Life And Clergy Care. It was part of the General Conference Delegate packets, on blue paper (pp F9 - F12). This proposal outlined much of SLACC's future growth and development while emphasizing that each stage would evolve as talent, resources, finances and time allowed. Enough has happened to take the space to tell about recent growth and continuing needs for assistance.

PENSION PLAN

The proposal for SLACC included that this institution, with authorization from the Board of Elders, might initiate and facilitate clergy benefit plans such as retirement, health insurance, etc. In the case of the Clergy Pension Plan, approved by General Conference, SLACC was a further impetus to develop the proposal and is the staff office of the Board of Pensions.

The Board of Pensions will be a separately incorporated entity which will make all decisions regarding the course and direction of our own pension for the benefit of the clergy. SLACC will carry out the directives of the Board of Pensions, most of which will surround information gathering and dissemination and record keeping. Questions, information, etc. concerning the pension should be sent to Pension, P.O. Box 691566, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

The Board of Elders will appoint the five members to the Board of Pensions (three lay and two ordained clergy). They have already requested resumes from qualified applicants through a special enclosure with "Keeping In Touch." I understand that inquiries about serving on this Board have come from people with backgrounds in mainline denomination pension programs, investment brokers and insurance executives.

Remember, the proposal for the pension plan which is in the General Conference packets is just the plan design and not the plan itself. The plan is much more detailed and will become more so as the Board of Pension guides its development. The record keeping system is being set up by this office with the information clergy gave on the pension questionnaire. Clergy, if you have not yet sent in your questionnaire, please do so as this correct information is needed. If you did not receive one or have lost it, notify me and I will send you one.

As voted by the General Conference, the pension plan will be financed by the obligatory assessment of each United States

congregation of 30 cents per active voting member (member in good standing) per month. This is payable quarterly (paying three months' assessment at one time) to the pension fund. The assessment begins January 1, 1984 with the first quarter's payment due no later than April 10, 1984. This obligation has the same sanctions as those which apply to the Fellowship tithe and the District assessment. (See Resolutions Nos. 2, 3 and 6, p. A-118 of the G.C. packet).

Each local congregation will pay this assessment whether or not there is a licensed or ordained MCC clergyperson as pastor, interim pastor or worship coordinator. Likewise, the per member assessment does *not* increase when there is an assistant or associate pastor or clergy on staff. This plan is not to be viewed as a part of a local church's benefit package but is a contribution to the Fellowship's pension plan for all eligible clergy. Many congregations will choose to offer an additional retirement program specifically for their pastor as a part of the benefit package. For further clarity about the plan review the proposal and relevant resolutions (pp. A106, A118) passed by the General Conference. Further information will be sent as more details are available.

SLACC OFFICE

Samaritan generously offered space for a private office adjacent to the school. This office has its own private entry to the public hallway and is not accessible from the school complex. The SLACC office is nestled away in a quiet corner of the first floor while the hub bub of Fellowship business occurs on the third floor.

The office is newly painted and furnished with personal equipment of desk, bookcases, file cabinet and chairs. The best feature of this new office is that it provides complete privacy and confidentiality to all who seek its services. Off premise counseling is available for those of you who feel more comfortable meeting elsewhere.

FINANCES

This area is developing the slowest. The General Conference did authorize, in the budget, that SLACC may raise \$25,000 in this six months, however, none of this money may come from the regular tithes and other income which finance the Fellowship. This gives us a paper figure to use in approaching foundations. Of even more benefit in this and in meeting current expenses would

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JOURNEY is a monthly magazine of UFMCC. The focus of JOURNEY is to provide news and report issues of concern within UFMCC and the Lesbian and Gay community. Contents are copyrighted and may not be reproduced or extensively quoted without permission.

Editorial Office: 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029. Phone: (213) 464-5100. Subscription rate \$16.80 per year U.S., Canada, Mexico. \$20.80 other areas. Published by Universal Fellowship Press. Printed in U.S.A.

All materials submitted to JOURNEY must be inclusive of gender, age and race. The Editor will modify any language not meeting these criteria.

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COVER: Cory Allison

Samaritan

An Orientation To MCC Pastoring

by Sherre L. Boothman
Dean of Samaritan College

One of our Fellowship's greatest needs educationally has been to provide adequate training for our pastors. The need has been for both the training of student clergy and the continuing education of clergy. I have been blessed with the opportunity to announce a new program called "Orientation to MCC Pastoring" that will be sponsored by Samaritan College next summer.

This program was designed by the Samaritan Management Team at its March 1983 meeting. It has since been revised based on feedback from the Clergy Credentials and Concerns Committee, the Board of Elders, the faculty of Samaritan College, and numerous other individuals throughout UFMCC.

The Orientation to MCC Pastoring is designed to provide training to student clergy and continuing education to clergy in the practical aspects of pastoring in MCC. The entire program is designed as a six week intensive series of seminars. Participants will be able to register for two week blocks of the program. The CCCC recommended that parts of the program be offered at different locations to help make transportation cost reasonable. For the summer of 1984, three MCC's have graciously offered to co-sponsor parts of the program. These churches will be providing classroom space, coordinating housing, and arranging lunches on the days classes will be meeting. Two of the 2-week block will be offered only in Los Angeles. These are the locations and topics:

*MCC Los Angeles
Los Angeles, CA
June 11 - July 22*

First 2-week block:

Counseling and Christian Education:
June 11 - June 24

Second 2-week block:

Worship and Preaching: June 25 -
July 8

Third 2-week block:

Church Administration and Self-Care
and Growth: July 9 - July 22

*MCC Detroit
Detroit, MI
June 18 - July 1*

2-week block:

Counseling and Christian Education

*MCC Dallas
Dallas, TX
July 30 - August 12*

2-week block:

Worship and Preaching

Each of the three locations will begin with a day with our Moderator, Rev. Troy Perry. The participants will have time to hear his story, share with him during the day, and socialize that evening. The faculty will be clergy and laity from all over UFMCC, including Rev. Freda Smith, Rev. Don Eastman, Marge Perry, Jackie Walker, Rev. Delores Berry, Rev. Jennie Boyd Bull, Rosa Tinetti, Rev. Jeffrey

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embodying god's Love

SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

By Jeffrey Pulling
Hartford, Connecticut
Collective Writer

It is my strong conviction that if we want to discover what we really believe, all we have to do is to look at what we do. Our actions are a clear demonstration of what we really believe about God, about ourselves, and about other people. This is called "operational theology" - you do what you believe. Our behavior and actions are motivated by our deeply held convictions and beliefs. To bring our operational theology into line with our ideal theology (i.e., what we want to believe or profess to believe) we have to make a *conscious* decision to do so.

It is also a strong conviction of mine that MCC was called into being to proclaim God's universal, unconditional love for all humanity, including Gay and Lesbian persons. We are called to be a people who will both proclaim and live God's love for all people. This is what God is calling us to believe about ourselves, and this, I think, is what we want to believe. Our actions, however, often negate this calling and show that we do not really believe God's love for ourselves or for other people.

Being in an educational ministry now, rather than a pastoral ministry, I have the opportunity to do much observing in worship services of local congregations (rather than always being one who is in charge and who has to make things happen). One of my major observations is the crying need for a *Ministry of Welcome* in every local congregation. If we are going to convince the people who visit our churches that God really does love them personally and that they can experience this love in MCC, we have to consciously decide that we are going to do this and then follow

through. The primary place where this practical embodiment of God's love needs to take place is the Sunday worship service. It is at worship that most people first become exposed to MCC and to MCC's message, and they need to feel welcome and free to participate as much as they wish.

A necessary ingredient of a *Ministry of Welcome* is of course ushers/greeters. The

need for such a role in Sunday worship services is so obvious to me that I am truly surprised when I visit a church that doesn't have them, or when I notice people standing around looking like ushers but who don't do anything. In either case, newcomers are left to fend for themselves. When people visit an MCC service they should be welcomed with a smile and spoken greeting, with an invitation to sit and join in worship, with a worship bulletin, and with an introduction to any hymnals and other worship aids used. I have actually visited churches where I had to hunt for a bulletin (they were on a back table). I have visited churches where I was given the standard hymnal but not the supplemental songbook which had two of the songs for that service. If someone like me, who has been thoroughly immersed in MCC for over 11 years, can get confused in a service, imagine what newcomers feel!

After the worship service, it is important to greet visitors again, but not to smother them or embarrass them with too much attention. Ushers/greeters can take the lead in this also, introducing the visitors to other people. Care should be taken to protect first-time visitors from unsolicited sexual advances. Some may indeed have come to church to "cruise," but there are other things they need to discover at MCC about Christianity and God's love.

What I have covered so far, I see primarily as a *lay* responsibility. From my own pastoring and staff experiences I know that pastors and others who lead and guide the worship have too much on their minds before a service and after a service (we all know the church business that is taken care

of on Sundays) to devote much time and energy to newcomers. It is up to the lay members to do most of the personal welcoming of visitors and helping them feel comfortable in this strange new church they are experiencing. When I pastored I spent time training ushers and greeters and then set them to work.

The worship leaders, of course, are responsible for making the actual worship service a sharing of God's love through song, preaching, prayer and sacraments. The warmth, sincerity and assertiveness of worship leaders can be a powerful witness of God loving people through other people.

The worship bulletin is also the responsibility of the worship leaders. It is the purpose of the bulletin to be an aid in worship, to guide the congregation in their worship of God. Bulletins that are sloppy, confusing, or incomplete can be more of a distraction and hindrance than an aid. In order for newcomers to feel welcome and a part of the worshipping congregation they need to be able to know what is going on. Changes in the service should be announced.

It should be easy for someone unfamiliar with a MCC-style service to follow along, not confusing. Words to *every* song and response, no matter how familiar to the regular congregation, should be written out - either in the hymnal, bulletin, or appendix or supplement to the hymnal. Visitors who do not know how a particular congregation sings the Doxology or Gloria or prays the Lord's Prayer will feel left out and embarrassed if they start in with their own familiar words and then discover people around them singing/saying something else. Songs, which everyone is expected to know but which are not printed for a newcomer to follow along, are an indication to the newcomer that they are excluded from this closed church group because they don't know the music and terminology. We do not want to give the impression that MCC is a closed society where only those who are thoroughly initiated in MCC ways can fully participate

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Real ~ Clergy Spouses

by Bev Teagle
Lay Minister

Having read *Real Men Don't Eat Quiche* and *Real Women Don't Pump Gas*, it seemed only appropriate to delineate the qualities and characteristics of REAL clergy spouses. Drawn from observations and comments by others (certainly not from PERSONAL experience), the following are offered:

REAL CLERGY SPOUSES

- ** don't take messages.
- ** never lose their identity.
- ** have no opinion at congregational meetings.
- ** feel free to disagree with their spouse at open board meetings.
- ** don't need a surname.
- ** understand completely the financial needs of the church and don't expect their spouses to have a salary.
- ** enjoy substandard housing as sort of a "decorating challenge."
- ** never mind being left out of invitations for out-of-town speaking dates.
- ** are flattered that the new member finds his/her spouse so attractive.
- ** are amused by the 2 a.m. phone calls from the new member, "Just to talk."
- ** never heard the title "collar queen," and certainly never met one.
- ** are never attracted to someone else.
- ** don't need close friends in the congregation.
- ** don't need close friends outside the congregation.
- ** don't need close friends.
- ** relate equally well to every individual in the congregation.
- ** have no unmet spiritual needs.
- ** never get involved with church controversy.
- ** are never the focus of church controversy.
- ** never feel guilty when saying "No."
- ** are flattered that the congregation takes such interest in everything they say and do.
- ** don't need time alone with their spouses.
- ** actually prefer to be ignored at conferences.
- ** attend all church events, activities, classes and services.
- ** ENJOY all church events, activities, classes and services.
- ** never met a congregation they didn't like.

continued from page 4

in worship. A congregation that desires to be open to new people and to incorporate them must make them feel a part of what is happening in worship. It should be easy for visitors to participate in the service if they wish to (some do come, of course, just to observe).

Announcements, both written and spoken, should be clear as to time and place and how someone may participate or find out more if they wish to. So many people are unnecessarily excluded from activities because they don't understand what is happening or how to find out. Vague references or shorthand initials in the announcements prevent newcomers from grasping what the announcement means.

I hope and pray that these simple practical suggestions will help local congregations to better embody God's love to those who visit their services. I don't know of any MCC lay member or clergyperson who consciously wants to exclude visitors or make them feel unwelcome. By not thinking, however, of how we come across to someone unfamiliar with our ways and worship, we are in effect making it more difficult for people to come to know God's love for themselves through the vehicle of MCC.

Let's do what we want to believe about God's love. Let's embody God's love to everyone who visits our churches.

WORLD CHURCH EXTENSION

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am glad to write and to tell you all is going well with us here. I have been away to the federal capital "NEW" Abuja to execute a contract given to me there. The amount realized from the contract has helped me greatly in my ministry.

Owing to the present economic blockade in Nigeria things are not as expected before. We need your prayers these days for Nigeria is in trouble now. Many people have died since the end of the Governorship elections held on the 13th of August 1983. Lives and properties are burning every day so we do not know actually where we are heading. There is a great confusion everywhere. The trouble is greatly in the west, the home state of the leader of the Unity Party of Nigeria, Chief Abafomi Awolowo.

Please never forget us in your prayers.

Rev. Sylvanus Maduka
Extension Coordinator
Nigeria



UFMCC's Commission on Faith, Fellowship and Order

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article by Rev. Jennie Boyd Bull is Part Two of a two part series titled "The Eucharist as Embodiment: Toward a Sacramental Theology of Sexuality." The excerpts are taken from her ordination paper.

FFO is developing a grass roots Christian Theology of Sexuality. The following does not report an official stand of the commission.

by Jennie Boyd Bull
Chair, FFO

Embodiment in Elements

The elements of bread and wine are a physical reality that form the core for understanding of eucharist as embodied in the "flesh" of this world. As Gustave Martelet so well describes them in *THE RISEN CHRIST AND THE EUCHARISTIC WORLD*, the bread and wine speak of God's creation, of human creativity, and of true human relation to culture: "Culture acquires no true value except by becoming for (humanity) a food that sustains life and a drink that fosters love." The elements also partake in the most fundamental of human social activities: eating as a communal activity of radical egalitarianism, where all meet as equals. These elements therefore must always be seen as both themselves and much more than themselves.

The tendency toward particularization and objectification of the elements of the eucharist in Christian history can be paralleled and illumined by Western culture's similar reduction of sexuality from whole body relation to genital

specificity. Nelson states the converse:

Growth in sensuousness is also marked by the diffusion of the erotic throughout the entire body. If the narrowing of sexuality's focus to the genitals is a mark of alienated sexuality, its diffusion throughout the body reflects its sanctification.

What is true for sexuality is also true for eucharist. Diffusion of the meaning of the elements and of the significance of the eucharist to the entire event and throughout the entire body of the gathered church reflects increasing "sanctification" of eucharist.

The elements also focus on the basic need of the human body for food. Martelet explains: "Hunger is the objective need of a body for an object which exists outside itself and which is essential for its integration and expression of its nature." By the same token, Nelson's main thesis is that: "The mystery of our sexuality is the mystery of our need to reach out to embrace others both physically and spiritually." Martelet integrates both sacrament and sexuality in his emphasis on the body as language: "The body is accordingly defined as 'the soul's field of expression' or as 'the symbolic reality of humanity.' In fact, it may be said of sacrament as well as of sexuality:

Sexuality is not a separate compartment of human life; it is a radiance pervading every human relationship, but assuming a particular intensity at certain points.

This same relation exists between the "particular intensity" of the sacrament of

eucharist and the sacramentality of all creation.

Embodiment in the Congregation

The congregation assembled for worship participates in eucharist as the Body of Christ, offering itself to God for transformation into Christ's body broken for the life of the world, the new community in service to the world. And this has clear "embodied" implications for the church, as Nelson presents:

Unless, then, we become as little children we shall not know the meaning of community. But this also implies the capacity for affirming the qualities of the body -- spontaneity, pleasure, feeling -- which are all deeply sexual. The Body of Christ is thus antithetical to any spiritualistic dualism. It is not a community of disincarnate spirits but of bodieselves bound to each other in and through their incarnate Lord.

The real presence of Christ in the eucharist is as much manifested in the "communion" of the gathered people as Body of Christ as in any other physical way -- the others being the elements as body and the priest as Christ, the "head" of the body. In fact, Christ is most truly embodied in this communal sense; both elements and priest, while having their role, are too objective and individual a sign. Only in the gathered people is *relationship* the central factor. The very nature of the realm of God "at hand" in this meal is that of the communal

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feast, the relationship of gathered, radical rejoicing in Christ, more than any individualistic or objective embodiment in priest or elements.

In Western tradition, sex has been relegated to the confines of marriage, between husband and wife of opposite sex, legally sanctioned to guarantee patriarchal control, property ownership and inheritance. In the same way, eucharist has been hierarchial, with apostolic succession of the priesthood allowing only a male priest at the altar, the male spiritual head separate from the female body of the church, and confined within the "marriage" of rules for who celebrates when, who may or may not "communicate," membership requirements and other rules for "good behavior." Excommunication (outside the gate of the feast) has been used for centuries by the Christian church to discipline "sinners." As Gays and Lesbians, our experience of being "outside the gate," often literally excommunicated from other churches, gives us the unique and wondrous joy of knowing that Christ's presence is beyond all "marriage," all legal boundaries for "communicating" in relationship. Matthew 9:10-13 speaks this truth:

And as he sat at table in the house, behold many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when Jesus heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I care not to call the righteous, but sinners."

We know that in the resurrection Jesus comes especially to free the oppressed, to reach the Samaritan woman (John 4), the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8), the "sexual sinner outside the gate" of every age, who is not judged by culture's rules, not even those of the institutional church, but by the love of God that is broader than human minds.

*"O, it's so high you can't get over it,
So low, you can't get under it,
So wide, you can't get around it,
O, love of my soul."*

*Love of my soul in the bosom of
Abraham,
Love of my soul in the bosom of
Sarah,*

*Love of my soul in the bosom of
all of us,
O, Love of my soul.*

Embodiment In The Church

In UFMCC we have traveled away from male hierarchy, to equality of male and female as priests, we have also journeyed toward the priesthood of all believers, toward the giftedness in ministry of the whole body, toward lay ministers celebrating eucharist, toward the importance of the relation of the whole body in union with God, rather than the "once-removed" relation of the priest with God, as intercessor. It is profoundly true that as we inclusify our priesting, we more fully know that whoever stands at the table stands for all of us and with all of us, intertwined as one part of the whole body. Just so, in our sexual relating, mutuality is the key as we move beyond the intensity of the individualistic monogamous relation to the truth that all coupled relating is part of a larger web of friendship, community, social order. We are *never* isolated lovers. Especially as Lesbians and Gays, we know the truth that claiming the wholeness of our love is never isolated from the reality of oppression, both internalized oppression sickness and the very real homophobia of our culture.

Diffusion of the meaning of the elements and the priest to the entire event and the entire body reflects increasing sanctification of eucharist. In the same way, diffusion of the meaning of genital sexuality and individual relationships to the entirety of bodily intimacy and to our entire community of friendship, reflects the increasing sanctification of our sexuality. I am *not* advocating multiple genital relating, sex with all of one's friends, or any such thing. I am saying that there are no "laws" for sexuality, that recognizing its diffusion throughout our relations and throughout our bodies lessens the necessity of and focus on genital relating, making sexuality less objectified, less needy, more whole, more "con-celebrating." One pastoral application is the usefulness of family systems therapy in counseling, helping us to see our individual relating as part of a larger social, familial context. This is especially important in healing the broken family ties so many of us have experienced in rejection because of our sexuality.

I would also add that in UFMCC we experience the intimacy of relationship in eucharist, beyond the "untouchability" of

its reception in many other churches. We *HOLD* each other; we come in ones, twos, threes or more; we sing together; we pray individually with people and for each other. I am especially awed by the "touch" language of eucharist. Sometimes we gaze into each other's eyes. My prayer with the helper before distributing each Sunday is, "We give thanks for Christ shining in the eyes of each person who comes to us. We give thanks for Christ shared in this meal." Sometimes we hold each other at a distance, tentatively, as we learn to trust. Sometimes we cling to each other, sobbing. Sometimes we rock each other, as mother and child. Sometimes we embrace mutually, as ones who are lovers. Often our hands seek to hold the other in those parts of the body that need healing -- tension in the neck or back, aching head -- we intuitively know the healing power of touch, in the Holy Spirit.

As one who distributes communion regularly, I believe that part of being open to the Spirit must always be to know how to respond to, reach out to, respect, each person's body and space as they come to me. Many people need space, the dignity of standing on their own when they receive. Others find the only embrace they receive all week. Some stiffen, then relax; others cling, then stand tall; some close their eyes, then gaze in joy. The wonder of the physical embodiment in the diversity of our relating is a powerful testimony to the feasting and celebrating we share. Sunday after Sunday, I experience the person who has come to communion for the first time after years of rejection, of feeling unworthy to feast. The tears and cries of "It's been so long, so long" are powerful testimony to the ways eucharist in UFMCC speaks to us in the same ways sexuality does -- with all our being, in powerful, healing emotions. We need regular weekly communion, in much the same way our bodies seek regular sexual intimacy.

*For this reason I bow my knees
before God, from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named,
that according to the riches of God's
glory, God may grant you to be
strengthened with might through the
Spirit in the inner person, and that
Christ may dwell in your hearts
through faith; that you, being rooted
and grounded in love, may have
power to comprehend with all the
saints what is the breadth and length
and height and depth, and to know
the love of Christ which surpasses
knowledge, that you may be filled
with all the fullness of God.* ■

More to Love than making love

Reflections on Psalm 98; Acts
10:34-5; I John 4:1-7; John 15:9-17

by Chris Glaser
Lay Minister

"There's more to love than making love . . ." the Roberta Flack song goes. It is all the more poignant because it serves as the theme for the film *Making Love*, in which a woman realizes she must let go of her Gay husband to truly love him, and so "there's more to love than making love."

No one would deny this. Making love is but one of many expressions of love.

"If I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing," St. Paul writes in the famous chapter on love in I Corinthians. Translated to our own time and our own experience, many of us could testify to giving our bodies, getting burned and profiting nothing as we search for love!

We like to *speak* of love. We like to *feel* love. Yet how we resist actually *attempting* it! We want the easier road: the dream, the knight in shining armor or encastled princess, the romantic feelings. We avoid the reality, the imperfect world and imperfect people, and the struggle honestly to love.

The Psalmist tells us: "God has remembered God's steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel." The message is: "God loves people of faith even when we are unfaithful."

Jesus says to his disciples and to us: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down one's life for one's friends." The

Chris Glaser is a graduate of Yale Divinity School and has served the West Hollywood Presbyterian Church for the past six years as Director of the Lazarus Project, an outreach ministry within the Gay and Lesbian community. As a member of the Presbyterian Task Force to Study Homosexuality, he was involved in that denomination's debate over the ordination of Lesbian and Gay people, and was not ordained himself because of his openness.



message is: "As Jesus loves us, so we must love one another, even to the point of giving our lives."

Peter preaches in Acts: "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to God." The message is: "God is not so parochial in God's affections as we are. God loves all who seek God and do good."

And the early church and today's church is told in I John: "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and one who loves is born of God and knows God." The message is: "Spirituality and theology begin in love."

These are not new messages. We're reminded over and over again in our churches that God loves us. And Jesus loves us, *sacrificially*. And that God doesn't care about our condition, sexual orientation, race, gender, marital status, age, physical disability, political party or religious background, and so on. God loves

everybody, we're heard proclaimed and proclaimed ourselves. And we've said, we've gotta love everybody, too. But perhaps we haven't said enough about how we go about doing this. Reflecting on the scriptures quoted, guidelines or characteristics for love emerge. But before exploring these guidelines, we first must come to an appropriate understanding of love.

The love that Jesus speaks of, and indeed, the love which the whole New Testament promotes, is not a sentimentalized love, nor a romanticized love, nor an unrealistically idealistic love, nor a love bound by feelings. Loving God with all your heart means loving God with all your *will*, since at the time Jesus spoke these words the heart was considered the seat of the *will* rather than of the emotions. Loving your neighbor as yourself means *choosing* to love your self and *choosing* to love your neighbor, again, acts of the will. Loving your enemy certainly doesn't require of us feelings of love, but rather,

adopting an attitude of love: a benevolent attitude, wishing the best for your enemy, wishing him or her *shalom*, God's full-bodied peace, health and prosperity.

Love, then, for Christians, is borne aloft by the will more than by good feelings. That enables us to love even when we don't experience good feelings, even when don't feel good, even when the struggle to love doesn't feel good. Christian love is governed more by choice than by chance or chancy feelings. There's more to love than feeling love.

An excellent definition of love is found within a remarkable book written by M. Scott Peck, a psychiatrist and a person of faith: *THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED / A New Psychology of Love, Traditional Values and Spiritual Growth*. Love is defined as "the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth."

This love is not passive, but active. It requires extending and transcending oneself. It is not selfish, neither is it other-directed. Its purpose is nurture, not of the transient or the superficial, but of the eternal and the basic and deeper human needs. This is the love of which Jesus and the New Testament writers speak. Their love is "the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth." And here spiritual growth means growth of the *soul*, both body and spirit.

The quoted scriptures suggest at least six characteristics of loving in this way. Beginning with the Psalmist: "God has remembered God's steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel." The "house of Israel" could read the "house of faith" or the "people of faith." God's intent revealed over and over again in the Old Testament is to nurture the spiritual growth of the children of Israel, this people of faith.

Throughout their time oppressed as slaves in Egypt, throughout their 40 years wandering in the wilderness, throughout their victorious conquest of the Promised Land, throughout their humiliating ouster and exile from their homeland by the Babylonians, God continued to nurture these people of faith through the liberator Moses, through the gift of the Law, through judges, kings, priests and prophets; enabling them to understand the events of their history within a broader purpose of being a spiritual presence in the world, "a bright beacon to the nations." God's nurture of this people of faith grew out of the covenant relationship God had with them. This covenant is celebrated by the Psalmist

as "steadfast love and faithfulness." Two characteristics of the love I described are found here: *steadfastness* and *faithfulness*. God loved the children of Israel steadfastly and faithfully through their times of oppression, wandering, victory and exile; and from God we too might learn these two ways to love others through their times of oppression, wandering, victory and exile.

What does steadfast love mean? Loyal love. Always there. Not smothering. Not always hanging around nor waiting around. But *available*. Even when its need is not recognized, even when the need seems desperate. Even when not appreciated, even when unrewarded and unreturned. It may become the loyal opposition, but it doesn't run away, desert, nor refuse to engage you. Unconditionally there. This doesn't mean the expressions of love or the levels of intimacy may not change, but it means in whatever form the love remains. That's steadfast love. That's God's love for us. God's love for us challenges us to love others steadfastly. To love others steadfastly is a choice of the will, a decision to be made.

Faithfulness sounds the same as being steadfast, but it is different. The children of Israel perceived themselves in a covenant relationship with God. A covenant bound God and the children of Israel together. The covenant was made of mutually agreeable promises. God promised to be with them. The people promised to keep the law handed down through Moses. God never broke the covenant. But we can read in the prophets of the Old Testament the many times and the many ways in which the people did break their covenant with God.

Through Jesus Christ, we, too, are in a covenant relationship with God. We, too, are bound with God by mutually agreeable promises. In Jesus Christ, God promises to be with us. In turn, we promise to follow Jesus Christ, abide by his commandments to love ourselves, our neighbors, our enemies, and God.

This concept of covenant gives us a clue how we might better love one another: by faithfulness to mutually agreeable promises to one another as family, lovers and friends. (In a lover relationship, faithfulness is sometimes confused with monogamy; but monogamy may or may not be a mutually agreeable promise and so may or may not be a part of faithfulness in a relationship. On the other hand, simple monogamy does not mean faithfulness: there are many ways of being unfaithful without failing to be monogamous.)

Once we enter into covenant relationships, mutually agreeable promises, then a part of being faithful is to challenge one another when not living up to promises made. And, as God sought the spiritual welfare of the children of Israel, so we may include in our covenanting a promise to nurture one another's spirituality.

Faithfulness in love is a choice for which we must take responsibility.

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down one's life for one's friends."

Jesus said this as he was about to lay down his life sacrificially in forgiveness for our sins. His example suggests a third way we may love one another beyond being steadfast and faithful: we, like Jesus, may be *sacrificially forgiving*. Willing to go the extra mile, as Jesus put it. Willing to forgive even when they "know not what they do," as Jesus forgave those who crucified him. Willing to turn the other cheek, avoiding revenge and refusing to return evil for evil. Sacrificial forgiveness. That's the toughest choice to be made as we choose to love others.

"Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to God."

God shows no partiality. From this we may take the *unconditional* nature of God's love. Most of us are in the church because we have begun to experience the unconditional nature of God's love. This is the beginning of our experience of God's grace, that God loves us without condition, *a priori* to any action we take. God sends sun to shine on the just and the unjust. God sends the Son, Jesus Christ, to give a smile and an embrace to everyone.

We could learn from this. We could learn to love unconditionally. Don't just greet your friends as the Pharisees do, complained Jesus to his disciples and to us. Help the wounded stranger lying alongside the road, as the Good Samaritan did. Heal the mute demoniac who tortured himself among the tombstones, as Jesus healed. Invite the weary, hungry Emmaus traveller into your home and offer him bread and wine and perhaps your eyes will be opened and you will recognize the Christ in your midst.

Sometimes it's easier to love the stranger unconditionally than to love our lover or our family or our friends or our fellow church-folk unconditionally. But that, too, is our call. When we fail to love unconditionally, our love becomes a subtly

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Profile

The dirt road rises gradually, in sharp contrast to the winding, steep highway just left behind. Patches of pasture break into the wooded scenery, revealing an occasional horse, a few cows, and simple farmhouses where rural inhabitants carve a life from the mountainside.

At the top of the hill, the thinning fall foliage momentarily parts to reveal two chimneys rising above the horizon, looking rather like a castle at first glance. The road curves and dips and one loses sight of the house until the rutted road levels out once more.

Past the weather-beaten rabbitry, past the new blue barn, Halekalani Pastoral Retreat Center finally emerges from the surrounding countryside, imposed on a hillside and made of natural logs and massive stone carried from the ragged land which encircles it.

A simple farmhouse, this isn't, although its simple, clear-cut lines enchant the architect without offending the pioneer. A quarter-mile driveway leads to the double doors which stand unlocked in silent affirmation of its name, "Halekalani," Hawaiian for "House Without A Key."

It began with a lot of hard work and a dream: a retirement residence for three women and their spouses, an operating Appaloosa horse ranch, a place to live and work in peace and quiet. Dr. Beverly Teagle, one of three corporate owners, came to northwest Arkansas to build the home she had designed.

Prematurely retired due to physical disability, she camped in the unfinished structure until the carpenters and stone masons and contractors gradually left.

The asthma that had abruptly ended her career began to improve with the exercise of helping to finish the house, and with the clear mountain air. Stronger, healthier, and with much of the work done, she began to reach out for friends in the surrounding communities.

She was able to resume a part-time medical practice, but the isolation didn't end until she became part of MCC of the Ozarks. There she found the faith and the friends for which she had been looking.

The dream expanded. "I always knew

this was a special, healing place," she repeats. Friends came from distant places to put their lives into perspective, to recover from broken relationships and broken dreams.

Convinced that her mountain had a special ministry, but not knowing what that ministry was to be, Bev waited for months. When Rev. Nancy Radclyffe began to work with the Spiritual Life and Clergy Care Center, the concept finally fell into place. "Then I knew what we were

supposed to be doing," Teagle said.

Contacting Rev. Radclyffe and securing the cooperation of her corporate partners, Teagle opened their home to MCC clergy and student clergy last fall, to experience the same healing atmosphere that has encouraged her own return to physical and spiritual health.

It will be several years before her partners expect to retire to the ranch, but their generous emotional and financial support is essential. In the interim, the spacious house welcomes those who are burned out, troubled with congregational or personal conflict, who are in the midst of transition, or just needing some time away to relax.

Teagle pushed to finish her doctorate in nutrition, finding a link between unhealthy bodies and suffering spirits. Knowledgeable about stress and burnout, com-



The south end of living area looking toward clergy care room. Kitchen is to the left.

binning professional skills with her own growing spirituality, she stands ready to offer preventative and corrective help to people in need.

First-hand exposure to the challenges facing the clergy came with the relationship with her spouse, Rev. Sam Edelman, former pastor of MCC of the Ozarks. Weighing 260 pounds, smoking three packs of cigarettes a day, sleeping too little, eating on the run, working erratic hours, and, in general, self-destructing at a rapid rate, Edelman was typical of too many of our clergy.

Eighteen months later, the smoking is cut in half, 100 pounds have vanished, and Sam is on her way to a longer lifespan and a more manageable life. "The solid information, the encouragement, and the non-judgmental acceptance Bev offered me, has made the difference," she said.

"Sometimes I'm afraid we run the risk of sounding like crusaders, but from personal experience, I know that our clergy need the kind of help we can provide," Edelman added.

The ranch retreat admittedly isn't for everyone. Some visitors cannot adjust to the quiet, the absence of traffic, the distance from cities. The ranch is 17 miles from the nearest town. The six miles of dirt road, before reaching the highway, usually takes 45 minutes to travel.

The horses are breeding stock, so horseback riding is not available. (If one insists upon riding, the "house rules" provide advice - but no assistance - on how to saddle a cow.) Structured activities, except for cutting and hauling the wood to supply the four fireplaces and the central furnace during the fall and winter, are not readily available.

Guests, however, who want to read, to rock on the front porch, to write, to play the guitar or organ, to fish, to pray, or to walk in the woods will find the place ideal. Eureka Springs, a nearby resort community, offers an impressive variety of craft and antique shops, an 8-month outdoor "Passion Play" comparable to the European Oberammergau, and an assortment of tourist attractions, including the "Christ of the Ozarks" statue. An outing to Eureka Springs is a memorable break in the solitude.

At a cost of \$3 per day (\$5 per couple) plus food, the expense to visitors is small. Charges are made only to cover utilities. Geography and transportation are usually the biggest obstacles.

Travel by car is no problem for those who wish to drive; the nearest airports, however, are small and serviced by limited

airlines. The most reasonable airports are those located in Springfield, MO and Tulsa, OK. The resident pair often make the trip to transport visitors. Other MCC members and clergy in the area have also volunteered to help deliver guests to the ranch.

The house itself was designed to offer privacy to its inhabitants. Large enough to hold a dance, and more than adequate to accommodate 20 or more participants in the week-end seminars that Edelman periodically conducts, the house provides plenty of room to relax.

Future plans, as the dream continues to expand, include the possibility of establishing outdoor campsites for those who prefer that type of retreat, and constructing a separate sanctuary on the property. There is also a smaller farmhouse, now unoccupied, which would provide complete privacy for visitors. The two women expect to work on the repair and remodeling of the smaller house this winter, making it available for use next spring.

Reservations for Halekalani are made through Rev. Radclyffe, chaplain to the

clergy. "We would prefer that people don't wait until they are in a crisis situation before seeking help. We hope our ministry is one of preventative, as well as immediate, care," Teagle stated.

The growing collection of notes, cards and letters, written both during and after retreat times, offers convincing testimony to their ministry. "God was at work in your house last night . . ." one reads. "I've never experienced such clarity before . . ." another says. "Thank you for your advice. I can't believe the difference it has made."

The two residents arose one morning to find a note from a clergy visitor. It simply said, "Thank you for leaving me here, stranded with God." The ministry of the mountain is vividly encapsulated in those few words. This is a special place to go, to touch the healing spirit which empowers those who would lead and those who would serve.

"The Spirit and the Spouse say 'Come.' " Bev Teagle and Sam Edelman echo the invitation, holding the doors open to the "House Without A Key."



Front view of house with trees in bud. Front meadow sprinkled with daisies.

fellowship news

our journey

PROJECT SEEKS TO HELP GAY MEN AND LESBIANS IN RURAL AREAS

Helping to provide Gay men and Lesbians in rural areas with counseling and social activities in their areas is the goal of an outreach program now underway in northeast Iowa.

Church of New Hope MCC of Waterloo/Cedar Falls has received a \$5,000 grant from the Chicago Resource Center to establish support groups for Gays and Lesbians in this area as well as other target areas centered around the cities of Dubuque, Decorah, New Hampton and Mason City.

The church staff will help local Gay men and Lesbians in coordinating activities, as well as providing for guest speakers and other support personnel. In addition, members of the church staff are available for interviews with local media about the groups and the goals of this mission.

Church of New Hope pastor, Bob Galloway, says, "Gay men and Lesbians often feel 'trapped' and isolated in rural areas and small towns, which points to the need for the establishment of support groups in their local areas."

As a part of being a support New Hope has helped to create other places of support for those in the community who are not church oriented. They have provided space and leadership for the establishment of both a Lesbian Rap Group and a Gay Male Rap Group. They established a speakers panel and a campus ministry for the University of Northern Iowa, and were instrumental in the start of the UNI-Gay and Lesbian Outreach student group on campus. MCC provides training, leadership, and the phone line for Gay men and Lesbians. For the last six years the church has planned and sponsored, in cooperation with the local Gay bar, a summer picnic for the Gay and Lesbian community. They have also assisted in the formation of a Gay support group in Ottumwa, Iowa. Within

the wider community MCC has been involved with the beginning of the Cedar Valley Food Bank and the Iowa Peace and Justice Center.

FEMINIST THEOLOGY RETREAT WEEKEND

by Marcia Alary
Maranatha MCC



Maranatha MCC, Hayward, CA recently sponsored a Christian education weekend. The subject for the weekend was Feminist Theology and its Prophetic message for MCC congregations.

The workshops held were: "Perspectives on God, Who is She/He For Us," led by Pat Evans of San Jose MCC, "Pre Christian Religions and Post Christian Feminism," led by the Rev. John Nicholas of Diablo Valley MCC, and "Weaving the Fabric of Wholeness," led by the Rev. Jodi Safier, Maranatha MCC.

Now that the easy part is over, how do I tell you about the weekend? The workshops were excellent, thought provoking, touching, anger producing in some cases, informative, and and and. I could go on and on with adjectives describing the weekend but instead will try to give you an overview of some of the things that were discussed.

Friday evening was spent talking about our own perspectives of God. How did we see God, what attributes did we believe God had, were they male or female, and did we see God as male or female or as neither? The other part was, did we always see God in the same way, or did our perception change according to our mood, our needs and the influences happening in our lives at that time? As you would expect, the answers were many and varied. This time of sharing our own perceptions of God brought to the group a sense of closeness and sharing and of risking that took us into our evening worship with a

very real sense of family even though not everyone knew each other. The evening worship service was led by the Rev. Bob Copestake.

Saturday's first workshop, led by Rev. John Nicholas, gave us some of the history of women in religion and talked about the meanings for us today. This workshop produced some excellent information and also gave many of us a great deal to think about. One of the topics of conversation was defining the female attributes of God and how this can increase our understanding of the nature of God.

The afternoon workshop, led by Rev. Jodi Safier, talked about what is it we, as men and women together, need from each other and how we could change or alter our worship services to reflect our various needs. The men and women then separated to discuss what our needs were and how we would like to change things. When we came back together it became clear that both the women and the men would like to see changes but did not have a real clear idea of what changes they wanted or how to make the changes happen.

Pastors expressed their fear of making changes because someone always gets mad and wants things to stay the way they have always been. The other people expressed their lack of knowledge about how to request and/or effect changes in their own churches. In the discussion that followed I believe everyone got a clearer understanding of what being a pastor was all about and I think the pastors got a clearer idea of what being a lay person was like.

When I first came into MCC a few years ago I heard people say they couldn't tell me what a conference was like, and that I'd have to experience it for myself. At first I couldn't understand what they meant, why couldn't they and what was so difficult about telling someone what a conference, Excel weekend or retreat was about. Well let me tell you, I soon found out what they meant. There is no way I know of to put into words all the emotions and feelings we experienced. This weekend was another one of those times. How can I tell anyone else about the love, the understanding, the care, the risking, the hearing, the learning and above all, the Spirit of God that was in this place this weekend. I can't and I won't even try. Suffice it to say that 40 people came together this weekend and left feeling that they took with them a real knowledge of what being a part of the family of God means.

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manipulative force in other people's lives. Once I witnessed a boy with his father and grandfather. The young boy was dancing around the room like a ballet dancer. The father said to the son, "Don't dance like that or your grandfather won't love you anymore." The clear implication was that grandfather wouldn't love him if he did other than what a "real man" was supposed to do. Perhaps not always as blatantly as this, we've experienced how manipulative conditional love can be.

To love unconditionally is a choice; like being steadfast, faithful, and sacrificially forgiving, loving unconditionally doesn't come naturally - it is something we must choose to work at.

But what enables us to do the "unnatural?" To love steadfastly, faithfully, forgivingly and unconditionally? This leads to a fifth characteristic of love.

"Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and one who loves is born of God and knows God."

The fifth characteristic of the love of which I speak is that it is *rooted in spirituality*. To know God is to love. To experience God loving us increases our ability to love. To experience *how* God loves us broadens our capacity to love, encourages and inspires our choice to love. It is when we shut ourselves away from God's love that it is most difficult for us to love ourselves and our neighbors. When you feel loved and loveable, doesn't it increase your desire to be loving? And just as the way to love is found in the way to God, so the way to God is found in loving. "For love is of God, and one who loves knows God" or experiences God. To choose the spiritual life is to choose to love; to choose to love is to choose the spiritual life.

A Lesbian with no religious background explained her reason for attending a workshop I was co-leading on Lesbians, Gays and the church: "In making love to my lover, I suddenly got in touch with a spiritual dimension I had never known before. Since God has to do with spirituality, I've decided to explore who God is and explore my spirituality." How often we limit our experience of God, and forget true lovemaking may also be a way to God! This woman reminds us one who loves has an opportunity to know God.

There is a sixth characteristic of love mentioned indirectly by the Psalmist which we cannot choose. In a sense, it chooses us. The Psalmist was chosen in this way and reports the experience: "Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth; break

forth into joyous song and sing praises! . . . Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who dwell in it! Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy . . ." A sixth characteristic of love is that it is *energizing*. Whether God's love or the love of a friend or an unexpected expression of love from a stranger - all are energizing, giving us joy, excitement in life, fulfillment in who we are and what we are doing, and inspiration for the future.

"Beloved, love one another . . ." Beloved, "will to extend yourself for the purpose of nurturing your own or another's spiritual growth." In such loving: Choose to be steadfast. Choose to be faithful to promises. Choose to be sacrificially forgiving. Choose to love unconditionally.

Choose the spiritual life which enables such love. And perhaps love's energizing quality will choose you. These are the challenges before us as people representing God's love.

A Chinese proverb says:

*"I hear, and I forget;
I see, and I remember;
I do, and I understand."*

Our choice to love steadfastly, faithfully, forgivingly and unconditionally from a spiritual base will enable us to understand what it is to love, and what it means to experience the joy that we thought only belonged to God.

Scriptures quoted are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible with inclusive language changes. ■



Judy Dahl
1235 S. Ivanhoe Way
Denver, Colorado 80224

THE EVER CONSTANT SEA

Just when I thought I understood it so well. Just about the time I held the solution in my searching hands . . . I saw it spill through my hands and travel back to the sea . . .

Have you ever felt this way . . . about the big question in your mind? Have you ever looked for the answer only to find out that you were asking the wrong questions? I have.

For the past several years my big questions have been those about God. What does S/he look like? Is She as much like me as He is to my brothers? Is God really "both and neither," or is it a bunch of linguistic gymnastics to keep us away from dealing with the more difficult issues of male/female sexuality? Are women really getting in touch with their need to embrace God within . . . are we really seeking to find that God in ourselves? Do we really believe that we are made in Her image . . . I mean, do we believe it the same way our brothers seem to?

Somehow, over the past few months, I have come to a strong awareness that my questions don't fit my lifestyle. I mean . . .

I have been talking and thinking like a "big bad feminist." I even had the gall to start a church in this denomination with a primary outreach to the feminist community. (The church isn't living at this time . . . maybe there isn't a need?!) So . . . I tried to "put my faith in action." I really tried to live out that belief that women are oppressed in this society and that we need liberation from a patriarchal past . . .

Is it all a contradiction?

If I believe it . . . then why am I still asking questions? Why are my questions the same today . . . even after my experience? Why do I ask myself if She is as much like me as He seems to be to my brothers? I think because it is so much harder to believe outside community. It's harder to believe that feminism and Christianity *can* dialogue and embrace each other when there seems to be so little fertile soil for that to be planted in . . . I think women in the Christian community are still lonely and friendless sometimes . . . While we can't help but be "familiar" with the male experience . . . we *live* in it . . . we could never really "make it our own" . . . and "our own" experience is often a mere shadow waiting inside for the courage to be liberated.

Why do I say this? Because it seems to be true. Maybe I don't believe She's "both and neither" after all. Maybe my faith is weak when I'm lonely. Maybe if you don't believe it with me it doesn't matter. Or maybe it just doesn't matter.

I have a question for you. Do you think God needs to be liberated from the hearts of women? Do you think He lives there in her image? I put this question in a bottle and float it out to sea . . . if you find time to look it up . . . would you answer me?

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Pulling, Larry Rodriguez, Rev. Jimmy Brock and many other very talented teachers.

A brochure on the program will be available this month which will detail the seminars, the faculty and tuition cost. This brochure will be included in "Keeping In Touch." It will also be mailed to all pastors and worship coordinators, and all student clergy listed with the CCCC sub-committee on student clergy (Rev. Ken Martin, Chair).

We are very excited about this program. The CCCC unanimously felt that the program design was wonderful and much needed in UFMCC. Rev. Troy Perry has affectionately nicknamed the program "boot camp" for the training of MCC pastors. Rev. Nancy Wilson says, "This is the largest educational program ever done in UFMCC at the Fellowship level." Everyone reviewing the program has felt that it will be a major step towards answering one of our most urgent educational needs. Elder Michael Mank said the program "will help to build relationships between pastors and future pastors that will provide them professional support for years to come." We hope you share our enthusiasm for this program.

While the program is designed to meet the educational needs of pastors and future pastors, it is open to all who wish to participate. For more information please write to: Samaritan

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Suite 104
Los Angeles, CA 90029-9990

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Samaritan Extended Studies

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS RESOURCES FROM

The 1983 Advent season begins Sunday, November 27, and Samaritan Extended Studies is once again making worship resources available to MCC congregations. An Advent resource booklet and a Christmas Eve service, both of which were also offered in 1982, are now ready.

Advent Resource Booklet contains information about the season of Advent, the colors of Advent, the Advent Wreath, Advent Calls to Worship (for lighting the candles of the Advent Wreath at the beginning of a worship service), and Advent Meditations. The meditations include a Scripture reading and short reflection for each day of Advent. This booklet follows the Nativity Story in the Gospel according to Matthew and explores the question, "Who is Jesus?" Cost is \$4.00.

Worship for Christmas Eve is a complete worship service for Christmas Eve provided as a resource for pastors and local congregations. Matthew's account of the Nativity is used. Included are Christmas carols in inclusive language, prayers, responses, the Christmas story, Holy Communion, lighting of the Christ candle, and lighting of individual candles. The price for a copy of the full service is \$2.00.

Make checks payable in U.S.A. funds to Samaritan Extended Studies. All prices include postage and handling. Send orders to:

The Rev. Jeffrey Pulling, Ph.D.
Samaritan Extended Studies
11 Columbia Street
Hartford, CT 06106

CONFERENCE FOR CATHOLIC LESBIANS

The CONFERENCE FOR CATHOLIC LESBIANS, established in November 1982, is committed to responding to the needs of Catholic Lesbians. Our goal is to build a community whose spirituality reflects our lived experiences as women, as feminists and as Lesbians. Our community is one that recognizes the diversity of our members and the strength and support that comes from this.

We provide a network between Catholic Lesbians across many borders: Statewide, nationally and theologically. It is revolutionary to say we are both Catholic and Lesbian, and it is our task and challenge to create a Church that accepts both. For more information write:

The CONFERENCE FOR CATHOLIC
LESBIANS
Post Office Box 134
Highspire, PA 17034

classifieds

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DO YOU CARE?
TOGETHER WE COULD CARE
EVEN MORE!

Your generous donation to the Clergy Care program will enable us to provide increased services and aid to our clergy and former clergy, student clergy, and worship coordinators, as well as to their spouses and significant others. Mail your tax deductible donation to:

Spiritual Life and Clergy Care Center
P.O. Box 691566
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be your actual dollar gifts.

Some clergy have discussed pledging and sending a regular amount to SLACC - \$10 a month, a second tithe (the first 10% goes to the local church) depending on what is feasible for each. Laity who are concerned about the clergy have begun to send gifts. Local churches are encouraged to see the reality that this program will have positive side effects in their churches as well as first hand benefits to their pastor. In view of this, local churches are encouraged to pledge an annual or monthly sum to SLACC which may be a percentage of income or a fixed amount.

Districts are considering lump sum gifts and on-going percentage support. The Finance Committee Report (approved by G.C.) suggested that Districts should fund this program. Some Districts see the lump sum gifts, which help with start-up expenses, as justifiably coming out of "New Works" monies as this is a new work of benefit to the Districts. "Pastoral Care" is another line item in some District Budgets and a reasonable source of lump sum gifts.

Please consider both one-time gifts and on-going giving as both are needed. The actual dollar amounts, especially from potential recipients of our service, help convince foundations to give. A frequent question is, "How much does your constituency give?" They use that figure to help evaluate the value and need of the program.

RETREAT LOCATIONS

An article elsewhere in this issue describes SLACC's first Clergy Retreat Location. These locations will one day be spotted throughout the U.S. and Canada so as to be reasonable close to each clergy person residing in Canada and the U.S. Do not confuse these locations with a full-fledged retreat center. We do not yet have one of those. Usually they will be a private bedroom in someone's home, maybe a vacation cabin or just a wilderness area for those who like camping.

The cost of staying at these will be on a sliding scale so those with limited incomes will just pay for actual electricity, food and upkeep and those with greater income will contribute also to the growth of SLACC programs. Eventually there will be "scholarship" money for those who cannot meet even the basic expenses. Do

not hesitate to call or write about using one of these locations because your finances are limited.

If you feel you have a Retreat Location to offer, call or write me for an application form. That form will gather the information necessary to begin consideration of your location. Several people at General Conference told me they had such a location and I hope you will follow through on that initial offer with an application.

Some of these locations will have a skilled facilitator in residence or nearby for those who need guidance and support while on retreat. Others will be "do-it-yourself with God," for those who need the time and space for an on-going renewal rather than recovery. Spouses may accompany you as you prefer.

APPLICATIONS AND REFERENCES

I am sure some of you have wondered why you have to fill out an application and provide references when you have generously offered your services or spare room. Please know that your willingness to help is appreciated and noted. There are two basic reasons for this procedure:

1) To protect the people we serve whether clergy, significant others, student clergy, former clergy or Fellowship level lay leaders. Complete confidentiality is our major asset and we need verification (references) that our volunteers can keep confidences. We also need verification (references and transcripts) that our volunteers are skilled to deliver what they say they can. We cannot risk discovering an ill-equipped chaplain, counselor, workshop leader, etc. in the midst of someone's crisis.

2) To more adequately use and assign each volunteer and space by knowing more about each one, their interests, their strengths and weaknesses. The hope is to match the volunteer and recipient as closely as possible.

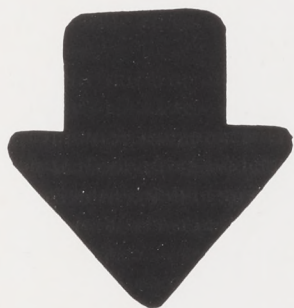
Your warm support and cooperation with this ministry has been greatly appreciated. Along with you I look forward to our continued growth as a program and as a Fellowship.

Mail to: Spiritual Life and Clergy Care Center
P.O. Box 691566

Los Angeles, CA 90069

(213) 465-4227

Donation checks payable to: SLACC-UFMCC.



CONTEST

JOURNEY magazine is proud to announce its first literary contest. The deadline for the Valentine's Day Story Contest is December 15, 1983.

The contest will offer two classifications. The youth classification will be for those 16 and under and the adult classification will be for those 17 and over. The rules for both are the same. Your short story should be no more than seven type written pages, double spaced.

The collective members will judge each entry for 1) Originality 2) Style and 3) Content. First place from each classification will be published in the January, 1984 issue of *JOURNEY*. Second and third place winners' names will be announced at that time.

PRIZES - Prizes for the first place adult winner is either *CHRISTIANITY, SOCIAL TOLERANCE AND HOMO-*

SEXUALITY, in paperback by James Boswell or *THE DIVINE FEMININE* by Virginia Mollenkott and a year's subscription to *JOURNEY*. Second and third place winners will receive *JOURNEY* for a year.

First place prize in the youth category will be a calculator and *JOURNEY* for a year. A year's subscription to *JOURNEY* will be awarded to the second and third place winners.

When entering, please include your name, address and indicate adult or youth classification. If you have a picture we'd love that, too. We regret that we will be unable to return stories or pictures to contestants.

